Wonders for a Cent

There's Little You Can't Do or See or Hear in the Automatic Parlor.

Useful as it is in emergencies, there is no question that the copper cent is a despised article. It has done much to foster the spirit of anarchism among street car conductors. Women despise its plebeian appearance in their satin lined purses, and street gamins in the Children's Court have the effrontery to suggest it as an excuse for craps. "Me pennies burned me pocket," said one of these culprits recently to the Judge.

There is one place, however, where the copper cent is not despised. This is in the automatic vaudeville parlor, where it represents more happiness than anywhere else in the world. Any kind of an ocular, auricular or psychic treat is exchanged for it.

In one of the most important of these establishments, the focus from which radiate branch establishments in all the cities of the country, there are nearly 800 machines of various kinds on one floor alone, and the rest of the big building is given up to offices of the company, to repair shops, and the basement to athletic contrivances of the slot variety, where giants come in in off hours and get a penny's worth of muscle.

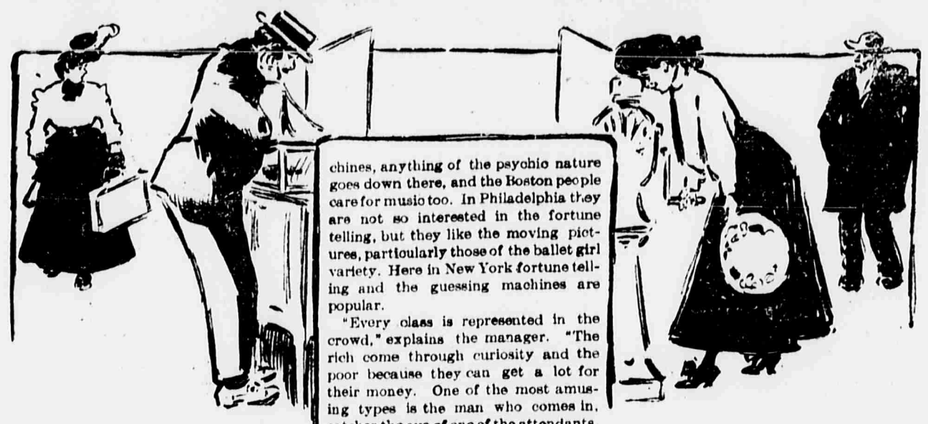
This special automatic parlor is so cleverly arranged that even the king of circus advertisers stood open-mouthed before its allurements. Its entrance is brilliantly lighted by night, and cleverly patrolled by day with wistful eyed paupers. Some specific attraction is in the entrance and, the first step taken, you are lucky if you get out without spending many a coin, for the ladder from copper to silver by the nickel-plate road is easy.

On entering at present a sleeping Cupid, wax and fat, reposes smilingly in a bed of pink paper roses; there is a quiver of golden arrows at his waist line, and he is divorced from the hurlyburly of a wandering world by a glass enclosure. He wakes only to the alarm of a falling copper. When he opens his eyes he tells your fortune.

Two 'Arrists gather with the visitor on the Cupid's outskirts. One has just been informed that she will marry in four months and is in a comatose state with staring eyes. The other is not so lucky, only a letter and a journey fall to her lot, with a slight accident which will put her in the hospital for three months and the sudden death of a dear friend as frosting to the cake of her delight.

"Sort of a writer, myself," explains the manager airily. "I write all the horoscopes for the astrological machine. It ain't as easy as it sounds. I had writer's cramp and gained a certain lofty disdain for literatoor which I have never been able to eradicate from my system, not even with the medicine from our own slot machine. I took fifty books on the Zodiac and its influence on human life and read them all carefully. Then I went into sort of a trance, and this is the result. Ain't bad, hey?"

The visitor puts a copper under the caption of her birth month. After a rumbling in the interior she sees a slip descend. The slip is lurid in color and contains the information that she is a Leo product and that she is of a keenly observant nature, noticing everything that gets in her way. She is destined to marry one of the opposite sex and is to be so happy that she will not even use the word divorce in her sleep. She has an active, aspiring, elastic nature, and will always come to the surface, even if she is thrown overboard by a cruel mischance of circumstances.



"JUST COME ALONG."

"WHERE ARE THE REAL WARM ONES?"

The manager sees in her guilty face that his winter's work has not been lost.

A little way from the astrological machine a donkey seated in a glass box, dressed with a certain regard to current fashion, smiles engagingly, and the visitor, borrowing another penny, drops it into the slot. The donkey flaps his ears, lifts a monocle to his eye, with the disengaged hand turns a tiny wheel by means of a baton and when the number you have chosen comes around you get another slip where you learn that "being absolutely without the faculty of keen observation granted the majority of your sex, you will always be in trouble; that you will never marry, and that if you had a little ambition or a little nerve to control adverse circumstances you might amount to something."

A short way from the donkey astrologer is a drinking fountain where you can wash your own tumbler and get a glass of fresh, carbonated water—all for a copper. It is estimated that 1,500 persons stop every day at this one machine.

"You would be surprised," explains the facile tongued manager, "how that one little catering to the weakness of humanity draws a crown. It is the same principle of the mechanical toy. Give a child one for Christmas and he is happy with it just so long as he can work it himself; work it for him and he won't notice it. The people like to turn on the fountain and get their own glass of water.

"This fact has been proved by the management who, when the place was first opened, placed various mutoscopes which ran themselves. They were not nearly so popular as the machines we have now, where you put the copper in and then turn a crank all the time you are looking. People seem to love to turn that crank."

Five or six thousand people a day on a rough estimate pass through the parlor, stopping here and there, and this does not include the rush on Saturday afternoon and evening and on Sunday evening as well.

According to data gathered in the office every place has its automatic peculiarity For instance, in Australia, where there are several branch houses, the patrons are direly afraid of the ear cups on the phonographs and even protest against their public use, while they manifest no dread of disease from the telephone.

In New York many inquiries are made concerning the danger to the eyes from the mutoscope and like machines. The truth is that that part of the business is one of the principal cares. Every machine is disinfected once in twenty-four hours and just as soon as the doors are closed a corps of cleaners are turned loose and every inch of floor is scrubbed and every bit of the walls swept and cleaned.

Boston is wild over fortune telling machines, anything of the psychic nature goes down there, and the Boston people care for music too. In Philadelphia they are not so interested in the fortune telling, but they like the moving pictures, particularly those of the ballet girl variety. Here in New York fortune telling and the guessing machines are popular.

"Every class is represented in the crowd," explains the manager. "The rich come through curiosity and the poor because they can get a lot for their money. One of the most amusing types is the man who comes in, catches the eye of one of the attendants, and whispers, 'Show us a real warm one.' That man is terribly disappointed when we inform him that we don't deal in 'warm ones.'"

The manager's remarks are interrupted by long periods of silence while the visitors walk about to watch the types.

A man with a suit case in his hands and a newness as to tie and hat which argues a week end visit has put a coin in the slot which is advertised to show "How She Kicked on the Cooking." He looks a little dissatisfied with the result, and tries "At the Dressmaker's." This does not please him any better, and he goes out with a depressed air.

There is a clerical gentleman of advanced years who is looking through the aperture into "Ten Nights in a Barroom."

"Regular patron," whispers the manager at our elbow. "He comes here for inspiration for his sermons. Told me once he did not like to go in the tabooed places, but he thought a minister of the Gospel ought to know what he was preaching about."

"You don't mean to say you have regular patrons?"

"I should say we did, and mighty particular ones at that. If we don't change our attractions just so often, we hear from it, I can tell you. You'd be amazed at the foreigners who use the phonographs to learn English. They take one song and hear it over and over every day until the ear gets trained to the sound, then they try another."

A Japanese is standing with a copper in his hands between the rival attractions entitled "Russian Soldiers in the Far East" and "The Industrial Life of Japan." It is a matter of moment, for it is quite evident the yellow faced economist does not intend to waste his substance. The die is finally cast, and with his small face mucilaged to the Russian army en route the spectator is obliged to be content with the wiggles of joy which his back evidences.

WAITING FOR A PEEP AT THE NAN PATTERSON PICTURES.

An anemic looking person casts a furtive look about, then slides a coin into a slot labelled: "See How Czolgosz Met His Death." A street car conductor is looking at "The Fatal Accident," and a prosperous looking stock broker calls one of the attendants to give him some coppers for a ten dollar bill. He looks at "My Lady's Boudoir" and seems dissatisfied. Later investigation explains the dissatisfaction, for my lady is reading a book before a wood fire.

A horror stricken female is leading away a small boy from a projectoscope where twelve rapid pictures of "A Chorus Girls' Picnic" reveal a whirl of disjointed drapery and some pink tights.

"That's as *risk* as anything we have," says the explaining voice, "and I don't think that's so awful, do you?"

The visitor who has come determined to know the depths of mutoscopic horror is visibly disappointed. She doesn't take the manager's word, and tries herself, but her coppers and ambition only show her a little osculatory practise, a mosquito on the fair foot of a sleeping maiden and an outraged wife who finds her husband at supper with a soubrette.

While the manager is explaining a man approaches whose appearance does not indicate that he has to take the humble copper into account. He has a complaint, which he voices emphatically. He has dropped a dime in the slot by mistake, and the attendant has refused to give it back.

"Our rule is," says the manager, "to take the name and address of the complainant and, when the machine is open, send him the amount."

"I am going out of town," repeats the aggressive person, "and I may not return for many months."

Finally the manager yields. "It is against all rules, for if we did that every time our attendants would be busy doing nothing else, but we will give in this once."

An attendant is called, the mutoscope opened and the coppers displayed. There is not a dime there! A crowd has collected, and the blusterer looks visibly ashamed.

"I must have made a mistake at the newsstand," he says hurriedly, and leaves, intent apparently on going back to his starting point in the search for the lost coin.

The manager looks disgusted. "That happens all the time! You would not think that human nature could be so mean, but it is. If some people lose a nickel in one of these slots you would imagine that they had lost a fortune, and it is usually the people who can best afford to lose that make the most uproar."

Then the manager leads the way to the rear of the establishment, where the athletes and the athletes to be foregather.

"Talk about regular patrons," he enthusiastically remarks, "we have more gymnastic 'fans' on our list than all the rest of the gymnasiums in town put together. And we are turning out sharpshooters all ready for the next war."

Several pistols and rifles arranged in such a manner that the marksman can sight the target are displayed. With one the copper not only gives you the shot but a miniature target on pasteboard, which shows by a pin prick the exact location of your effort. The small boy is standing open eyed, and a few coppers wisely distributed act as a boosting game and in a few minutes others try their luck.

A fat lady steps on a near at hand weighing machine—"If you tell your exact weight you get your penny back." The fat lady puts her copper in and marks 125 lbs. The unerring finger writes 189, and she gets down red and fuming.

"Your machine is out of order," she ejaculates.

"Put another penny in," the attendant soothingly remarks, "and if you get the same weight the second time you get your penny." She steps on again, quite mollified, and when the balance of 189 is struck again her copper comes tumbling out.

"Funny about women, ain't it," says the polite attendant. "She feels as if she hadn't spent any money at all."

There are various blowing machines;

HER FUTURE HUSBAND FOR ONE CENT.

"MAMMA'S BOY."

in one a certain amount of exhaled wind and a row of incandescent bulbs are blown out. If you get a certain height, back comes copper again. The same thing happens with a row of coconheads from which the hats are blown by lung power. Registers 650 by lifting a weight and your money is returned. Only about one in a hundred succeeds in doing any of these feats. There are machines for developing your hands or arms, for reducing weight or for putting it on. There is a vibratory arrangement by which you are made into a new man or new woman, as the case may be, and there is a tug of war.

"The first of these automatic parlors," says the manager, when asked concerning the history of the place, "was our own and it is about five years old. Before that there were parlors—no one knows why they are always called parlors—with just one kind of machine.

"The most important machine cost many thousands of dollars and was made right in the house here. It represents the St. Louis Exposition in miniature and there are places for twenty-five people to look at the same time."

The Oldest Editor in the World

Yonkers Thinks She Has Him in the Person of John W. Oliver, Who at 90 Is at His Desk Every Morning.

Yonkers boasts a man who is probably the oldest editor in the world—and a real editor, at that, for he is at his desk every morning, dictating the policy of the *Yonkers Statesman* and seeing to it that every part of the newspaper plant is run according to his own ideas.

John W. Oliver is only fifteen years younger than Hiram Cronk was when he died, and he bids fair to live as long as the veteran of the War of 1812. He was married for the third time when he was 84.

Every day when the weather is fine he walks from his home, Rose Cottage, on Warburton avenue, to the *Statesman* office and remains there until noon. His every faculty is good. Some one asked one of the men on the *Statesman* staff the other day whether Mr. Oliver's memory was not failing.

"You wouldn't think so if you worked here," was the answer.

Mr. Oliver's ninetieth birthday, celebrated recently, was the occasion of a reception arranged by his friends. They presented to him a silver service and four bouquets; each containing ninety flowers. The old editor's employees dressed his desk with flowers so profusely that he had little writing space when he came in for his usual day's work.

Editor Oliver has seen this country grow from 8,000,000 population to ten times that number. He has been connected with the printing trade for more than seventy years, and he has been in Yonkers forty years.

He was born at Baltimore on April 30, 1815. When he was 12 he was apprenticed to a printer and stuck to the job for eight years. When he was 20 he and a companion struck out for New York.

"I was a member of a club of young fellows in Baltimore who were leading wrong lives," he said. "One evening I reflected, and, turning to a companion, said I was tired of the kind of life we were leading. I stayed away for a few nights, but in a short time drifted back again.

"I saw then that to break with my old associations I must get out of the city, and I made an agreement with my companion to meet at 5 o'clock the folowing Sunday morning and walk to Philadelphia. When we started we had but $5 each.

"We arrived in Philadelphia about dark, strangers in a strange city. While considering where to go we were accosted by an old Quaker, who on learning that we had left Baltimore to escape evil associations gave us a night's lodging and on the following day secured work for my companion.

"The printing trade was very dull in Philadelphia at that time and my friend wanted to return to Baltimore, but I persuaded him to go on with me to New York. We had to walk all the way, and when we crossed the North River I had six cents.

"I sent my friend to search for a boarding house while I sought work. I found a place in a printing office, and within a month I was foreman. Two years later I went into the printing business for myself.

"My friend got a place on a whaling vessel and some years later came to me and placed in my care about $700, the proceeds of his voyage. He returned in a few days and insisted on having the money, saying that he was going to Baltimore.

"In 1840 I assisted in starting the Washingtonian movement and incidentally took a trip to Baltimore. Just after my arrival I found myself billed to speak at a big temperance meeting. I tried to get out of town, but the committee captured me and took me to the hall.

"In the audience I saw my former companion, whose appearance indicated that he had become a drunkard, and I used our experience as a text, but my fallen friend is now in a drunkard's grave."

Mr. Oliver started the *New York Organ*, a temperance paper, in the early '40s. He and his brother Isaac published it in what was then called THE SUN building, at the southwest corner of Fulton and Nassau streets. They organized the Sons of Temperance in 1842.

Mr. Oliver prospered and in 1866 he bought his present home in Yonkers, intending to retire, but in 1872 he became editor of the *Statesman*. In 1881 he was removed from the editorial chair for political reasons, but organized the Yonkers Publishing Company and bought the *Statesman*. He established the daily edition two years later and has been on deck ever since.

Mr. Oliver saw Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, shook hands with Lafayette at a public reception and saw Charles Carroll of Carrollton drive the first spike in the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.

EDITOR JOHN W. OLIVER AT HIS FLOWER DECKED DESK.

WOMAN WROTE PRIZE POEM.

Mrs. A. A. Lindsley Author of the Best Ballad on the Trail at Lewis and Clark Fair.

PORTLAND, Ore., June 10.—"John Malcolm Graham," winner of the prize of $100 for the best ballad on the Trail at the Lewis and Clark Exposition, turns out to be a woman, Mrs. A. A. Lindsley, who for a year past has resided in Portland. Mrs. Lindsley is the wife of a former State Treasurer of Washington. She is a graduate of the Michigan University at Ann Arbor.

Nearly four hundred writers of verse throughout the country competed for the prize. The fitness of the name the Trail for the amusement street of the exposition lies in its application to the famous old Oregon trail, and "hitting the trail" has become a familiar expression at the fair.

Mrs. Lindsley's poem is deemed peculiarly fitting for the purpose, as it brings out in strong, snappy language the lilt and swing of the rider "hitting the trail" to the westward, shows forth the development brought about by the pioneers and gives due honor to Lewis and Clark. The winning poem follows:

THE TRAIL.

The call comes, strong and insistent,
Out of the West—oh, hark!
"Follow through hail and sun the trail
Blazed by Lewis and Clark!"

On with the blanket and saddle,
Ride like the devil possessed,
Swift on the way by night and day,
Hit the trail to the West!

Sting of the wind in our faces,
Crunching of hoofs on sand—
Whate'er betide, pause not, but ride
Straight to the promised land.

Whiteness of sails on the ocean,
Gleaming of gold in the hills,
Glory of grain on the harvest wain,
Curling of smoke from the mills.

Off with the saddle and blanket,
Kindle our hearthfires' spark—
Here's all hail to the Westward trail
Blazed by Lewis and Clark!

When Uncle Sam Took Over Alaska

Danger of a Long and Costly Indian War Averted by the Gift of Some Whisky and Some Blankets.

A group of men were discussing the probable strategic value of Alaska to Russia at this time, had she not sold it to the United States. One of them, a retired army officer, was moved to tell an unwritten story of the transfer of sovereignty to Sitka.

"It will soon be forty years since Russia formally turned Alaska over to us," said he. "We had two men-of-war in the harbor of Sitka, and Gen. Jeff Davis, dead long ago, was in command of our land forces brought there for the occasion.

"He was an impulsive man, who had been court-martialed only a few years before for killing a brother officer at St. Louis. Few persons know how near he came when Alaska was turned over to us to bringing on an Indian war that might have lasted off and on for the next ten years.

"The Sitka of that day was a little stockaded town, with the Russian Governor's residence for its chief place. The Governor was a prince, which does not mean much in Russia, though his hospitality on that occasion was truly princely.

"We were entertained with all sorts of delicacies to eat and unlimited champagne to drink, and we returned the hospitality in kind. When the Russian flag finally fluttered down from the Government building and ours went up in its stead everybody was in a very good humor.

"An hour or so later, however, Gen. Jeff Davis happened to look beyond the stockade to a spot where about 2,000 Indians were encamped, having come to celebrate the occasion, and there he saw the Russian flag still flying. He was instantly in a rage, and calling an orderly he commanded him to go down at once and see that the Stars and Stripes take the place of the Russian ensign in the Indian encampment.

"Several officers warned him that he might make trouble if he did not go about this matter with care, but he repeated the order and the officer went. He talked through an interpreter with the chiefs and reported that they said that when Boston men gave the Indians firewater as the Russians gave it to the Boston men the change of flags should be made.

"While the orderly was absent the Russians opened several more bottles of champagne, and when he came back with the message about firewater for the Indians the General was madder than ever. He instantly ordered an officer to take a file of soldiers into the Indian camp and run up the American flag, adding that if the Indians resisted he would have their camp shelled.

"It was an awkward moment, for Gen. Davis had the power to do what he threatened, and should he carry out his threat there would inevitably be immediate bloodshed, followed perhaps by years of Indian warfare. The Russians quietly warned us against hasty action, and some of us got hold of the General and urged him to go slow.

"At first nothing would satisfy him, but at length he was persuaded to order that a few barrels of whisky should be distributed to the chiefs and some blankets to their wives. We watched him uneasily after this order was given, and it was executed with all speed.

"The chiefs were appeased by the gifts, and in less than an hour from the time the order was given the American flag was flying over the Indian encampment. That whisky and those blankets probably saved the Government of the United States millions of dollars."